

# The Nation

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## Fall Educational Issue

Reviews of Recent Educational Publications

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### The Payment of American Teachers

E. S. Evenden

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### The Outcome of the White House Conference

Lincoln Colcord

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### Hey, Rub-A-Dub-Dub

Theodore Dreiser

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### The Innocent Abroad

An Editorial

#### INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS SECTION

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sold only in connection with

The Nation

*In Next Week's Issue*

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in the text. He tells one or two stories that we do not remember to have heard; he includes several letters from Rossetti and Whistler that we do not remember to have read elsewhere. But he adds nothing to our knowledge of any one of the group, gives us no fresh impression of their personality or their work, and does not show them to us clearly from a dealer's point of view, which might have been amusing. He even misses their most salient characteristics. Whistler's wit seems blunted; Rossetti's charm evaporates; Sandys is no longer the superb, but the sordid; of Simeon Solomon nothing is left save the degenerate; Burne-Jones disappears in quoted descriptions of his pictures; Charles Augustus Howell actually, and for the first time, becomes a bore. It might be thought impossible to be dull in writing of Howell, the picturesque scamp, trusted in turn by Ruskin, Swinburne, Rossetti, Whistler, swindling them in turn and carrying it off with such gay effrontery that Whistler never quite lost a tenderness for his memory, though Swinburne raged, as we have just been reminded in his published letters. But Dr. Williamson achieves the impossible, and the long chapter on Howell is his dullest.

There are signs of haste, mistakes hard to overlook. The account of Sir Henry Thompson's catalogue is elaborate, and yet the illustrations and cover are inaccurately described. The title of Whistler's caricature of Leyland is not "The Gold Scale." Whistler's blue-and-white, with his silver, was shown at the Fine Art Society's before, not after, his death. It is some few years since the "Rosa Corder" ceased to be Canfield's property. It is not *believed* that the Peacock Room is "likely to pass into the possession of the American nation after the decease of Mr. Freer"; it is already, by the gift of Mr. Freer, the nation's property. And we might point to other inaccuracies, some slight in themselves but inexcusable when the facts were so easily to be obtained. For example, it is sheer carelessness to tell us on one page that Simeon Solomon died in 1905 and a few pages further on to give the date as 1895; to assure us, that, when not sober, "he was not a fit companion for any one," and overleaf to tell us that he was "still a charming and attractive companion." Dr. Williamson's book, it seems, was a labor of love. He would have done greater honor to the memory of his friend, greater service to the student of one of the most important periods in the history of English art, had he taken enough time and pains to make it a model of care and study as well.

N. N.

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## Drama

### Lincoln and Brown

WHEN will some one write us a play about John Brown as honest and sincere as Mr. Drinkwater's "Abraham Lincoln"? Not to tell us anything about John Brown, but just to make us think about him, as this play makes us think about Lincoln. Perhaps Mr. Drinkwater would smile at this and say: "Didn't you see? My play was about John Brown. He came into the first scene and he marched right through to the end." That is true—so true that at times you feel that the unseen, marching soul of John Brown is the real hero of Mr. Drinkwater's play. You feel it there, hovering at Lincoln's side.

The poet has handled the John Brown *motif* with extraordinary effect, and yet with a curious indecision. I suspect that Mr. Drinkwater had not anticipated Brown when he decided to write a play about Lincoln. Brown naturally came along, and Mr. Drinkwater, being a wise dramatist, did not turn him out, nor ignore him, but hospitably let him into the story. Yet, no matter how hospitable you may be, an unbidden guest is likely to make you uncomfortable. Mr. Drinkwater is plainly interested in Brown, and yet timid about him. Perhaps he did not know quite what to think about Brown, or rather he did not know what Lincoln thought about him. Mr. Cuffney of Springfield was similarly perplexed:

I could never make Abraham out rightly about old John. One couldn't stomach slaving more than the other, yet Abraham didn't hold with the old chap standing up against it with the sword. Bad philosophy, or something, he called it. Talked about fanatics who do nothing but get themselves at a rope's end.

Mr. Stone, another of Lincoln's neighbors, tries to explain:

Abraham's all for the Constitution. He wants the Constitution to be an honest master. There's nothing he wants like that. . . . He'd give his life to persuade the State against slaving, but until it is persuaded and makes its laws against it, he'll have nothing to do with violence in the name of laws that aren't made. That's why old John's raiding affair stuck in his gullet.

Mr. Cuffney persists:

He was a brave man, going like that, with a few zealous like himself, and a handful of niggers, to free thousands.

Mr. Stone: He was. And those were brave words when they took him out to hang him: "I think, my friends, you are guilty of a great wrong against God and humanity. You may dispose of me very easily, I am nearly disposed of now. But this question is still to be settled—this Negro question, I mean. The end of that is not yet." I was there that day. . . . There was a colonel there giving orders. When it was over, "So perish all foes of the human race," he called out. But only those that were afraid of losing their slaves believed it.

Mr. Cuffney: It was a bad thing to hang a man like that. There's a song they've made about him. (*He sings quietly.*)

So John Brown is in the air as Lincoln makes his entrance. "Ay, John Brown," he says. "But that's not the way it's to be done. And you can't do the right thing the wrong way. That's as bad as the wrong thing, if you're going to keep the State together."

Mr. Drinkwater seems to drop Brown with that. Yet in a later act, with the war in its second weary year, he makes an effective curtain with off-stage music, and an unseen crowd passing the White House singing:

John Brown's body lies a mould'ring in the grave,  
But his soul goes marching on.

No further mention of Brown. But Mr. Drinkwater keeps him in mind and remembers Lincoln's verdict, somewhat uneasily, I suspect. In order to "keep the State together," Lincoln has used the force he denied Brown the right to use in order to free the slaves. Has not Drinkwater's Lincoln, though still refusing approval, revised his judgment of Brown in the words with which he justifies the Emancipation Proclamation? "My



duty, it has seemed to me, has been to be loyal to a principle, and not to betray it by expressing it in action at the wrong time. That is what I conceive statesmanship to be." Two years of war had accustomed Lincoln, if they had not reconciled him, to the use of force. But Lincoln was too honest to imagine that his war in defence of the Constitution and the Union was intrinsically more righteous than Brown's crusade for freedom.

There have been two notable cases of direct action in American history. Both were followed by wars in defence and vindication of the principles which they expressed. Yet the two incidents stand on oddly different planes in the popular judgment. The Boston Tea Party, a wanton violation of law and private property, is proudly related for the edification of American children by elders who abhor a labor strike as a deed of criminal anarchy. But while Boston Harbor shines under a halo, Harper's Ferry rests under a cloud. Long after the North has forgiven the firing on Fort Sumter, and has come to think of the Rebellion as the spirited enterprise of gallant Southern gentlemen, even though it fought a war to prove those gentlemen traitors, it still views John Brown and his raiders as highly disreputable, if slightly picturesque, disturbers of the peace. John Brown was our greatest direct actionist. We hanged him and straightway made a song about his soul. We fought a war in defence of his principles. He broke the law and spilt some blood in the name of human freedom. Later Lincoln, in the midst of flowing blood, violated the Constitution in the name of the same freedom. What makes the distinction between the great statesman and the lawless agitator? Lincoln's definition of statesmanship, as given by Mr. Drinkwater, seems to supply the prevailing standard: "Not to betray principle by expressing it in action at the wrong time." By this token, the mere hopelessness of Brown's endeavor made it criminal; and, similarly, the Rebellion, by being so nearly successful, achieved respectability. But this is the doctrine that might makes right, which men have sought to disprove in the mightiest of all wars. There seems something so utterly illogical in the use of material force for spiritual ends that the mere presence of war and violence bewilders men's judgment and turns all definition and conclusion into paradox. *Sic semper tyrannis*, cried the mad assassin, killing Lincoln with a pistol. "So perish all foes of the human race," cried the mad soldier, hanging Brown with a rope. We call it statesmanship not to express principle in action at the wrong time; but we exalt to heroic martyrdom those whose fault and merit consist in having done that very thing. We damned Brown, the lawless raider, and canonized Brown, the heroic martyr. Our most stirring national song proclaims his triumphant immortality. At Lincoln's death the final curtain drops on Stanton's words: "Now he belongs to the ages." Which is what we sing about John Brown's soul.

KENNETH DURANT



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## BOOKS OF THE WEEK

### ESSAYS AND CRITICISM

- Galsworthy, John. Addresses in America: 1919. Scribners. \$1.25.  
 Grey, Zane. Tales of Fishes. Harpers. \$2.50.  
 Hendrick, Ellwood. Percolator Papers. Harpers. \$1.75.  
 Long, William J. How Animals Talk. Harpers. \$3.  
 Mr. Dooley on Making a Will and Other Necessary Evils. Scribners. \$1.35.

### FICTION

- Cannan, Gilbert. Mummery. Doran. \$1.50.  
 Dudley, J. Lawrence. Spriggles. Appleton. \$1.50.  
 Laselle, Mary A. (Editor) Short Stories of the New America. Holt. \$1.35.  
 Wodehouse, Pelham G. Their Mutual Child. Boni & Live-right. \$1.60.

### THE WAR

- Addison, James T. The Story of the First Gas Regiment. Houghton Mifflin. \$3.  
 Dennett, Carl P. Prisoners of the Great War. Houghton Mifflin. \$1.50.  
 Djuvara, Mircea. La Guerre Roumaine 1916-1918. Paris: Berger-Levrault.

## The New School for Social Research

will open October first for the study of current economic and governmental problems. The work will be conducted by a group of well-known writers and teachers among whom are

Graham Wallas of London, Thorstein Veblen, James Harvey Robinson, Wesley Clair Mitchell, John Dewey, Dean Roscoe Pound, Thomas S. Adams, Harold I. Laski, Moissaye Olgin, Charles A. Beard and Members of the Bureau of Municipal Research, Robert Bruère and Members of the Bureau of Industrial Research.

Courses will include lectures on Economic Factors in Civilization, The Development of the United States into a World Power, The Historic Background of the Great War, Modern Industrialism, Social Inheritance, Recent Tendencies in Political Thought, Problems of American Government, etc.

There will be afternoon and evening lectures and conferences to permit the attendance of those engaged in regular professions. No academic degrees will be required, but the standard of postgraduate work will be maintained. There will be general lectures and discussion for larger groups and small conferences for those equipped for special research.

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